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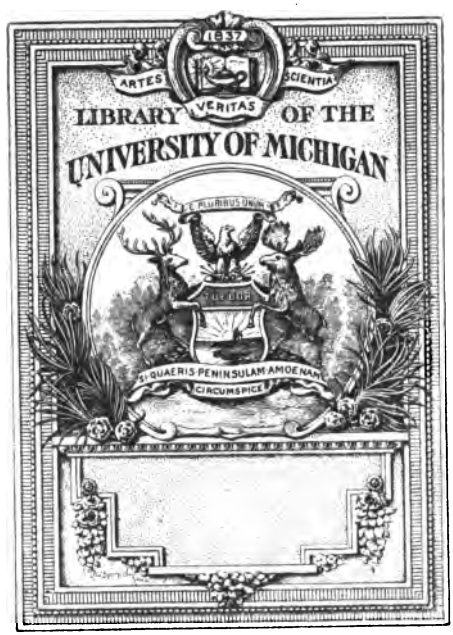
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The Nation and the Kingdom

ANNUAL SERMON

Before the American Board of Commissioners
for Foreign Missions

By REV. WASHINGTON GLADDEN, D. D.
COLUMBUS, O.

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The Nation and the Kingdom.

Lift up thine eyes round about and see; they all gather themselves together, they come unto thee; thy sons shall come from far and thy daughters shall be carried in the arms. Then thou shalt see and be radiant, and thy heart shall thrill and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee. Isa. lx: 4, 5.

This is part of a fervent apostrophe to the nation as the servant of Jehovah, that ideal in which was concentrated the hopes of the great unknown prophet of the exile. What kindles his expectation is his vision of a regenerated society, a society from which injustice and oppression and misery and want and all iniquity and wrong shall be put away; in which peace and good will shall abide and order and security shall reign. The prophet represents Jehovah as pledging his protection and care to this holy nation, this peculiar people; they are indeed, to represent him; it is through them that he is to be made known in the earth and therefore all his resources are at their disposal to enrich them and defend them, and crown them with his benediction. "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, desolation nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates praise."

What the prophet beholds in his vision, is the Kingdom of God, the reign of righteousness and truth and love in the earth. Was it not the same kingdom that John the Baptist announced and that Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount and that the Revelator pictured in his glowing representation of the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, to fill the earth? In this prophecy, spoken five or six hundred years before Christ, the prophet depicts that glorious society; in his vision he sees it established, and in the words that I have read to you, he is describing the mighty attraction

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that it is exerting upon the population of the world. They are flocking into it, nations and tribes and peoples. "Who are these that fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows? . . . Strangers shall build up thy walls and their kings shall minister unto thee. . . . Thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations and their kings led captive." As the prophet conceives it, this transfigured society, when the world once gets a fair look at it, will have irresistible attraction for the children of men. They will come into it in crowds, they will throng its gates, they will bring the strength and the glory and the honor of the nation into it.

Let us get it clearly before our minds what it is that exerts such a powerful influence over the minds of men. Let us listen to what this prophet has to say about it. "For behold," saith Jehovah, "I create a new heaven and a new earth and the former things shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create. For behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. . . And they shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them; they shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord. . . . They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations. . . For your shame ye shall have double, ... therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them. For I the Lord hate robbery with iniquity, and I will give them their recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them."

The establishment and maintenance of sound and fair social conditions; so that there should be no oppression nor injustice, but a square deal for everybody; so that the strong

should not be permitted to prey upon the weak; so that the law of helpfulness should prevail, instead of the law of ravine; this was the primary cause of the phenomena which we are considering. Such sound and fair social conditions would bring to the community in which they were established and maintained, unexampled and marvelous prosperity; and this prosperity and peace and happiness would promptly advertise themselves and set up an irresistible attraction. Such a society as this would be a magnet that would draw to itself, all the children of men. They would all want to be in it.

It is not necessary to conceive that the peoples from all parts of the world would abandon their homes and flock to the particular territory in which these social conditions were established; that is simply the outward costume of the spiritual fact. Even if the prophet himself conceived of it in this limited way, there is no reason why we should not descern the larger truth, that such conditions established in one community tend to repeat themselves in other communities, and these spread themselves over the world. The movement described is not geographical; it is social, it is moral; the kingdom of heaven is not advanced by gathering all the peoples into one place, but by inspiring them all with a common purpose. If New Zealand, on the opposite side of the globe, sets up a better method of social organization, the nations come to her light, and the kings to the brightness of her rising by adopting the same methods; by putting in operation on their own soil the principles which have brought to her order and welfare. And such imitation as this is sure to take place. If any people in the world can establish and maintain conditions similar to those which the prophet here describes, the day is not distant when all the other peoples will follow its example. The result will not be immediate; the world may wait for a good while to see how the scheme works before accepting it, but eventually it will win. Righteousness and truth, justice and fair play, kindness and friendship are what the world needs, and when the world sees them organized into society and bringing forth their natural fruits in society, the world will lay hold on them, and cleave unto them. That

is the way the kingdom of God is coming, by the mighty contagion of social justice.

It is touching to see the eagerness with which "poor sad humanity" has always turned toward any clear promise of the establishment on earth of this kingdom. When John the Baptist came proclaiming it, the people crowded to listen to him; they thought the real thing which the prophet had foretold was surely coming, and they were in haste to join themselves to it. And when Jesus took up the same theme in his Sermon on the Mount, the multitude thronged to hear him. What would have happened if the social aim of Jesus could have been realized then and there, if the society which is outlined in that great discourse could have been established in that little country of Palestine, we may faintly imagine. But there was simply no room in that quarter, nor anywhere else on the earth at that time, for the esablishment of such a social order.

"It is correctly asserted," says Dr. Rauschenbusch, "that the apostles undertook no social propaganda. Paul held no anti-slavery meetings, and Peter made no public protest against the organized grafting in the Roman system of tax forming. Of course they did not. Even the most ardent Christian socialist of our day would have stepped softly if he had been in their place. The right of public agitation was very limited in the Roman Empire. Any attempt to arouse the people against the oppression of the government or the special privileges of the possessing classes, would have been choked off with relentless promptness. If, for instance, any one had been known to sow discontent among the vast and ever threatening slave population, which was not negro but white, he would have had short shrift. Society was tensely alert against any possible slave-rising. If a slave killed his master, the law provided that every slave of the household should be killed, even if there was no trace of complicity. Upper class philosophers might permit themselves very noble and beautiful sentiments, only because there was no connection between them and the masses, and their sentiments ended in perfumed smoke. Under such circumstances, any prudent man will husband his

chance of life and usefulness and drop the seeds of truth warily. If the conviction of William Lloyd Garrison had burned in Paul, we should probably not know that Paul had ever existed. There is no parallel between such a situation and our own in a country where we are ourselves the citizen-kings, and where the right of moral agitation is almost unlimited."

This is the reason why the social aims of Jesus were not realized in his day. Doubtless he knew that they would not be. The seed had to grow secretly for many a generation before the blade of the Christian social organism could appear above the earth. The full corn in the ear was millenniums away. It would only be by centuries of indirect influence that liberty would be gradually enlarged, and room made in the earth for the establishment of a Christian social order.

So we have never yet had upon the earth a society representing on any large scale, the principles of the teaching of Jesus. We have had many societies, whose main reliance was on military force; many societies resting upon slavery or serfdom; many societies founded on feudal distinctions of ruling and serving classes; many societies whose regulative principle was competition, or a struggle for advantage and mastery; but we have never yet seen a society which rested upon the law of brotherhood and the principle of service.

Yet it is toward this that we have been steadily traveling ever since the day when the old prophet held up before the eyes of men his social ideal. One obstacle after another has been taken out of the way of its coming. The Roman Empire crumbled, under the disintegrating influences which it set in motion; feudalism has disappeared; slavery has been abolished; political democracy with freedom of speech and of the press is the rule of the foremost people of the world; and large elements in our social life have been, to a very great degree, Christianized. Philanthropy, the principle of compassion and kindness, has been largely organized into the social life of this nation; the defective and dependent classes are the wards of the state. A considerable part of the life

of civilized society is controlled by Christian principle. We have come to a day in which it does not seem quixotic to believe that the principles of Christianity are soon to prevail; that all social relations are to be Christianized. Listen to these words, spoken a year and a half ago, not at a missionary meeting, not by a minister, but by a journalist, who is not a church man, spoken at a political banquet in a western city:

"The whole world is coming into a new era. It is an era as distinct from the nineteenth century as the reformation is distinct from the middle ages. This new era is manifest in Russia as well as in Kansas; in England, as well as in Nebraska. It is manifest in religion as well as in politics, in business as well as in art. It is *the era of humanization, the era of brotherhood.* . . . Whether commerce will admit it or not, the chief concern of business today is not so entirely the accumulation of wealth as it was in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but instead, one of the chief concerns of business, is the distribution of wealth. . . . The spirit of mutual kindness has been moving slowly for centuries through the world. The seed was sown two thousand years ago and *the plant is now preparing to burst into bloom,* and the next thousand years may see some real fruit of the spirit of brotherhood."

It is a great testimony, and it is a true testimony. This keen watcher from the mountain tops of the movements of humanity, brings in a report which is surely entitled to credit. What is it that he sees and declares? It is the fulfilment of the prophet's vision, the realization of the Master's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. It is all coming true. It is no longer a dream, it is proving to be a reality. The city of God, the New Jerusalem, which the Revelator saw coming down from heaven is beginning to materialize before our eyes. It is still very fragmentary, very inchoate, it is like a new building rising on ground that has been occupied, and is but partially cleared; much debris and unsightliness is still visible; but we can begin to discern something of the plan and to rejoice in the beauty yet to be revealed.

While the witness whom I just quoted discerned signs of this dawning in other lands than ours, while, indeed, there

are in some other Christian countries omens no less auspicious than those which are visible around us, yet we may thankfully confess that the promise which meets our eyes in our own country is for us the clearest and the most convincing. That the prophecy is beginning to come true of America is not to many of us incredible. These words of the text, as we read them, sometimes sound like a transcript from a current history of the United States.

"Lift up thine eyes round about and see; they all gather themselves together; they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far and thy daughters shall be carried in the arms. Then shalt thou see and be radiant, and thy heart shall thrill and be enlarged because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee; the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee."

Have we not thus brought clearly before our minds the fact that the nation is to be an important agency in bringing in the kingdom? Has not the time come when we must learn to look for the employment of the nations by the divine Power, in the evangelization of the world? Is there not work to do in the salvation of the world which can only be done on the scale of the nation, and by the enlistment of national resources; and is it not needful that we who have this missionary work on our hands, should be well aware of this fact and should make large room for it in all our estimates and endeavors?

This is certainly the prophetic conception. It was through the nation, that the Kingdom of God was to be set up in the world. The contact of the holy nation, the socialized nation, with other nations was to result in the transformation of the other nations into the same type of national life, with righteousness reigning and plenty and peace prevailing. All these glowing promises made by the old prophets, of the triumphs yet to be won for the Kingdom of God in the world are made to the nation and not to the church. We have given to them so long a purely spiritual significance that it is difficult for us to realize that it was to a political rather than an ecclesiastical organization that all these promises are addressed. You may say that the nation was conceived as a theocracy, and that is true, but that is God's plan for every nation; he

desires no other relation to any nation than that which he maintained toward Israel. It was the people Israel, and not the priesthood, which was to be equipped for moral and spiritual leadership; it was of Israel that Jehovah testified. "Behold I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples." Any one who will read through these prophecies of the later Isaiah with his eye upon these references to the part which the nation is to play in the conversion of the world, will get some new idea of the magnitude of the missionary movement.

In truth, the evangel which the divine love is seeking to proclaim to all the peoples, is a truth so large that it can only be adequately uttered by a nation's voice. There is, indeed, a message for the individual and this the individual can utter, not indeed, in its completeness, but in such manner that it may meet the needs of him who hears it. To the individual, in his darkness and his loneliness, bending under a nameless burden, groping in paths that lead he knows not whither, without hope and without God in the world, our gospel has a message of light and comfort and salvation, and blessed is he who hears it, and blessed is he to whom is given the joy of speaking it. This is the message to which the emphasis of our missionary preaching and teaching has hitherto been given, and great and beautiful have been the gains that have been gathered from this sowing, in transformed characters, and regenerated homes. God forbid that this emphasis should ever be weakened, or that the brightness of this hope of salvation for the individual should ever be dimmed. How much need there is of filling the world with new life and power, we shall see, very soon.

Nevertheless, the gospel has been very imperfectly heard by any one to whom it has brought no other tidings than that of personal salvation. For in truth the individual is saved only when he is put into right relations to the community in which he lives, and the establishment of these right relations among men is the very work that Christ came to do. The individual gospel and the social gospel are therefore vitally related, inseparably bound together and salvation can

no more come to the man apart from the community, than life can come to the branch when it is separated from the vine. And the social gospel can be adequately presented only in the terms of the common life. No man can know what it is except as he sees it exemplified in the life of the community. The family can show it to us in part, but only in part; the church can illustrate only certain of the gentler and humbler phases of the common life; to know what Christianity is, we must see it at work on the scale of the nation. If we want the nations of the earth to understand Christianity, we have got to have a Christianized nation to show them. Small samples will not serve. The real question is, after all, what Christianity is able to do for the civilization of a people. The keen-witted Orientals, to whom we are making our appeal, the Japanese, the Chinamen, the Hindus, the Turks, understand this perfectly, and we must be ready for a rigid application of this test. It is perfectly fair. We are judging them in the same way. The religions of the world are forced by the contacts and collisions of world-polities, into a struggle for existence; the evolutionary processes are sifting them; and we shall see the survival of the fittest—that religion which best meets the deepest needs of human nature. Doubtless, each will make some contribution to that synthesis of faith which the ages are working out, but none of us doubts which one of them will stamp its character most strongly upon the final result. But the elements are yet in the crucible and Christianity is listening to the challenge of the millions to whom it offers the way and the truth and the life. And that challenge, as I have said, is addressed to the larger incarnation of its spirit in the life of the nation. The keen critics, to whom we are proffering our solution of the problem of life, are practically replying to us: "We must be shown. By its fruits we are judging your religion. That is the word of your own Founder. And we must find its fruits in the national life. The individual types that you send us in the missionaries may be satisfactory, but what we need to know is that these are not exceptions, that the society out of which they come is fairly represented by them. Yours is a Christian nation, so

we are told. We want to know what a Christian nation is like. We want to see what Christianity is doing for all classes of your people, for all departments of your national life."

This is the challenge by which our missionaries are halted on the frontiers of all the old civilizations. It is a challenge that must be met. If we cannot answer these questions satisfactorily, our missionary exterprise will have no large results.

It is needless to say that we sometimes find such questions embarrassing. For, in truth, as I have already said, our society is yet very imperfectly Christianized. That supposititious Chinese official, whose "letters" made some stir a few years ago, was within the truth when he said: "You profess Christianity but your civilization has never been Christian, whereas ours is Confucian through and through." It is true that our industrial society has been economic rather than Christian, and that our political society has been too closely assimilated in its ruling ideas, to our industrial society. The Christian conception of human relations has never been consistently applied to these great departments of our national life, and it is the sad truth that the Christian church has only recently begun to see that it is its business to make this application. That critic whose words I was just quoting says again, "Whether your religion be better than ours, I do not at present dispute, but it is certain that it has less influence on your society." This must be confessed to be a grave defect in the type of Christianity with which we are familiar. It has been quite too much employed, not in saving the world, but in saving people out of the world. Of course we have always had some interest in promoting righteousness and justice here on earth, but this has been a subordinate interest; if we could get people ready to die, the question how they lived together here did not so much concern us. Thus it has come about that the influence of our religion on our industrial society and on political society has been a superficial—oblique and not direct, incidental rather than central—and not a controlling influence, and the national life therefore, gives very imperfect expression to the Christian ideal. Nevertheless, in spite of our failure to apply our Christianity as thoroughly as

we ought to have applied it to these great departments of our national life, its indirect and partial influence has been felt in every part of the life of the nation; and just as it is, we need not shrink from the challenge of the rival faiths. We admit that America is not as consistently Christian, as China is Confucian; if it were, it would be a far better country than it is. We admit that grave and deadly evils yet mingle with our civilization; that poverty and vice and crime still infest the social order; that our industry in many of its phases is brutalized by greed; that we have harbored the growth of a plutocracy, whose presence on our soil is a shame and a curse to us, and have bred, at the other end of the scale, a proletariat whose helpless misery is the dismay of our philanthropy; we confess our public service is grievously disfigured and debased by inefficiency and corruption, and that multitudes of men seek public office as the opportunity of unscrupulous greed and ambition. With that tariff wrangle still sounding in our ears, in which there were so few public servants who were not ready to sacrifice the good of all to the gain of a few, it is quite impossible for any American to claim that the law of Christ rules our legislation. And yet, while we confess all these things with sorrow and shame, we must not shut our eyes to the saving virtues which do yet appear in the life of our own people. The nation is not yet sanctified but we may say of it what they said of the people who were added to the church in the Pentecostal revival, that it is being saved.

Most of that which is bad in our present condition was worse two hundred years ago, or one hundred years ago; in spite of all that has been brought to light by pessimists and muck-rakers, the health of the nation is sounder, its moral forces are stronger today than they ever were before. Much of that which startles and confounds us is due to the deepened and clarified ethical feeling of the people. The interests were just as selfish and insistent when the Dingley bill and the McKinley bill were framed, as they were last summer, but nobody paid much attention to them; today the people are mad all through at the exhibition of egotism. This does not

indicate a falling but a rapidly rising standard of political morality. Most of the other disturbing violations of social and political distemper fall under the same judgment. While, therefore, we acknowledge, with humiliation, that our nation still falls far below our ideal of a Christian nation, and while we are resolved by the grace of God to bring it a great deal nearer to that standard before this century is very old, yet even now, just as it is, we are not ashamed to put its civilization side by side with any civilization that is not Christian and let the world judge between them. With other Christian lands, we make no comparison, that is beside the point; but where in the world today is there a non-Christian country whose people enjoy so large a measure of well-being as ours possess? Where is the path to life as free as on this Christian soil? Where is property as secure, where is enterprise as unconfined, where is life as precious? Where, in any non-Christian land, is there any such provision, as that to which we are accustomed, for the alleviation of human suffering and the care and comfort of the disabled and the unfortunate? Where else are the gates of knowledge thrown wide open to the children of the poor? Tell us of any country outside Christendom where woman enjoys the honor and the freedom that here are her inheritance.

It is not necessary to pause for answer to these questions. The answer is coming in the tides of immigration always pouring into our harbors. Wherever communications are opened between our own country and non-Christian countries, the multitudes that throng to seek the protection and the opportunity which our flag symbolizes are convincing witnesses to the value of our civilization. Defective as our national performance is, when measured by the high standards of Christian morality, it yet embodies principles and forces and produces results which appeal, with irresistible power to the heart of universal humanity.

In that great chapter of his, on "The Advent of Humanity" in his book on "The New Epoch for Faith," Dr. Gordon puts high among the agencies which are leading in that advent, the United States of America. It is not, I am sure,

the fond conceit of a patriot, it is the reasoned judgment of a philosophical historian. Grievous as her shortcomings have been, I think it is true that "throughout the civilized world, government at the end of the nineteenth century is a very different thing from what it was at the beginning; and in bringing about this vast change, the influence of the United States has been predominant." And I hope that it is not in any petty national pride, but with profound and humble thankfulness for our great inheritance, that we are able to join with Dr. Gordon in saying: "In the ideas upon which it was founded, in the nature and scope of its political institution, in the striking intellectual hospitality of its people, in the object and issues of its great war, and in the human foundation which it asserts for religion, the United States has been, in this century, the foremost servant of the idea of humanity."

I believe that the people of all the nations are beginning to discern something of the loftiness of our national ideals and to turn, with wistful hope to America for leadership. And what has caught the world's attention is the illustration in the life of the nation of the Christian virtues. Dr. Gordon's esimate was made up at the end of the nineteenth century; but the first decade of the twentieth has lifted it into clearer light.

Ask China who it was that sturdily and successfully resisted the attempts of the powers to partition her territory among themselves and established the policy of the open door; and who it was that sent back a good part of the indemnity money, and who it is that has just been seeking within the last few months to rouse the conscience of the nations of the world against the accursed opium traffic. China knows that in all these matters, the United States has been her friend, and she knows that what this nation has done in these great matters has been done because she is in some imperfect sense, a Christian nation.

Ask Japan what evidence she has had within the last year that this nation means to deal with other nations on Christian principles, and whether Christian principles, thus

incarnated in the life of a nation do not commend themselves to her as sound principles of national life.

Ask the European nations who it was that urged the re-assembling of the Hague tribunal and led the way toward the arbitration of national disputes, and the establishment of peace and good will among men.

Ask the whole world who it was that laid a strong but gentle hand upon Russia and Japan when they were devouring each other, and brought them into an honorable peace. It was our President, you say, and he was acting on his own responsibility. Yes, but he never more perfectly represented the spirit of the nation, than in that unofficial act and all the world knows it. And all the world knows that the spirit of the nation as revealed in that act was the Christian spirit, and all the world stood still, reverently beholding a great nation going forth to claim the blessing of the peace-makers.

May we not say that the world has seen in the years just past such a manifestation of the glory of Christianity as it never before has witnessed, in these acts by which on a national scale, the spirit of Christianity has been exemplified? There have been great preachers of the gospel, great missionaries of the cross, but few, I believe, who have presented the principles of our religion to the non-Christian world, more convincingly than William McKinley and John Hay and John W. Foster and Theodore Roosevelt and Elihu Root and William H. Taft. Through the testimony of these witnesses the peoples of the non-Christian lands have gained a conception of the real genius of Christianity which they never had before. This exhibition must have its effect upon all our evangelical enterprises. I cannot doubt that because of these benign interventions of our national government the people of many of the eastern lands must be more ready than they have ever been to listen to the message of the gospel of Christ.

Perhaps it may occur to some minds that since the nation in these large ways is so effectively witnessing to the principles of Christianity, there is less need of such work as that which this society is organized to promote. I do not so conceive the situation. The government has rendered a mighty

service to agriculture in some parts of our western domain, in promoting irrigation, but that does not warrant any relaxation of diligence in the cultivation of the soil. The extensive husbandry which the Lord of the harvest is promoting by the testimony of the nations does by no means supplant that intensive husbandry which these missionary societies are called to practice.

In truth, it must be said that the witness of the nations would have made far less impression on the minds of the Eastern people if they had not had concrete examples of Christian manhood and womanhood living among them and illustrating the religion of Christ in the common affairs of life. They do need, as I have maintained, the demonstration, on the scale of the nation, of the value of Christianity; but their minds have been opened to the sense of that need by what they have seen of the men and women who have come to make their homes among them, and to reveal to them, in the terms of a sacred personal friendship, the reality of the gospel of Christ.

For these men and women who bear the name of Jesus among these people, have effective ways of making known the significance of that name.

The gospel begins with the statement that Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. The gospel begins in every mission field with this benign ministry to human suffering. There are few cities in the Orient where the multitude has not learned that the men and women who bear the name of Christ have wonderful power to heal the sick and give strength to the lame and sight to the blind. Everywhere the medical work of our missions is reaching down to the humblest and the neediest and easing their pains and soothing their wounds, and wiping away their tears. Their experience of a skill which to them is marvellous, excites their admiration, but they cannot help seeing that their skill is born of compassion and that wins their hearts. And when they sit down in the hospitals and the dispensaries to hear the surgeon read

to them the gospel story, they find out who it was that awakened in human hearts this impulse to care for the sick and the suffering.

The advent among them of the American family is also a revelation. I am aware that among some of these ancient peoples the family relation is greatly cherished, and there are features of that family life which we might well seek to imitate; but after all that can be said of Confucianism, the Christian home is not to be classed with any other institution on the earth as a training school of human character. How deadly are the evil tendencies which assail the foundations of the family in America, I do not need to try to tell; and the wreckage of households here produces conditions quite as deplorable as any that the Orient can exhibit. When we compare the lowest levels of our own social condition with the lowest cooly of India or Turkey or China, there is not much to choose. It may be that we can show the world a deeper degradation than that into which any Eastern nation has sunk, for the higher and fairer are the social ideals, the fouler is the deformity when they are trampled under foot. The worst is always the perversion of the best. The purest thing in the world is the heart of a good woman, and the vilest is the heart of a bad one. The infidel who scoffs at the God of Horace Bushnell or Phillips Brooks is a more revolting character than was the one who shut his heart against the God of John Calvin.

But civilizations are not rightly estimated on their lowest level; it is by their growth and not by their abortions that we must judge them. And when the best types of the Christian family are set over against the best types of the family in any non-Christian nation, there is no call for argument or demonstration. Certain it is that nothing can be done for China or for India or for Turkey, comparable with that which is done when the Christian family is transplanted to their soil, and they are permitted to look upon it with their own eyes, to witness its blossoming and its fruitage; to see for themselves what Christianity makes of womanhood and childhood; to feel the force of the mighty contrast between the

Christian home and the best form of family life elsewhere existing. We sometimes hear arguments on the score of economy, for celebate missionaries; and we all share the loneliness and pain of missionary parents in being parted so many years, from their children; but, after all, nothing can take the place in our missionary work of that object lesson which the Christian family presents to the non-Christian people. We could not make them understand what our religion means if we could not show them this. It is by just such fruits as these that we wish to have them know it. Doubtless, the Hindus and Confucians are apt to regard their domestic institution as superior to those of other peoples, and there is much superficial comment by Europeans and Americans, in which certain features of those systems are eulogized to the disparagement of our own; but all that is needed is that the differing types of family life be placed side by side. The home in which the wife is apt to be a menial; in which it is a very rare thing for her to be able "to read for profit or recreation," from which she can never depart without seeking permission; in which a social meal is a thing unknown, since men and women never eat together; in which the appearance of a girl baby is generally regarded as a calamity and from which multitudes of them are cast forth to die, and many more are sold into degrading slavery; such homes as these need only to stand side by side with the homes in which the missionaries live, in order that those who dwell in them may understand the meaning of the Christian religion. And it is somewhat surprising to hear Americans and Europeans of ordinary intelligence maintaining, in the face of that contrast, that Christianity has nothing to give which these non-Christian peoples need. The Christian school has also been a powerful agency in the preparation of the non-Christian peoples for that larger revelation which is now coming to them in the testimony of the nation. The thousands of primary and secondary schools in which boys and girls are receiving the rudiments of science and literature and history, and thus being prepared to understand something of the meaning of the world and life, and the colleges for men and women

in which ideals are lifted up and leaders are trained for a new civilization, are mightily preparing the way of the Lord. It is to this leaven that the healthy ferment now pervading Orient society is largely due. The new spirit in India, which reveals ominous aspects, but vast possibilities, is, in good part, the inspiration of the missionary schools. The awakening in China find itself in closest relation to the educational work so long prosecuted there, and the progressive forces of the Empire are eagerly seeking today to avail themselves of the aid and leadership of our missionary teachers. Could there be a more impressive testimony to the wisdom and value of our work? The part that missionary schools and notably the schools of the American Board have been playing in the regeneration of Turkey is well known. It is the simple truth to say that as in Bulgaria twenty years ago, so in Turkey today, the leadership of the reform movement is in the hands of young men who have either been educated in our schools, or strongly influenced by them.

We may say that the missionary work is in truth a method of revelation. It is to these non-Christian peoples, God's continuing revelation. God has always been revealing himself to men; he has manifested much of his goodness and truth to these non-Christian peoples. It is part of our great happiness that we, in these latter days, are able to discern this so clearly and to rejoice in it. Our missionaries, above all others, are teaching us to recognize the elements of value in all the other religions. We go forth not to destroy but to fulfill their form of faith. We expect to find in them much that is in harmony with our own belief, and some elements by which our own faith may be strengthened. Nevertheless, we know that we have something to give, something very vital and precious, and we believe that the larger truth with which we have been entrusted is ours that we may share it. This, I say, is God's method of revelation. His word to us is "Freely have ye received, freely give." But the substance of this revelation, now as always, is conveyed by personal contact. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." There is no way of teaching men what Christianity

is except by living it among them. What the missionary says is of secondary importance; what the missionary is and does—the missionary and his wife and children, in the relations of every day life, in buying and selling, in work and in play, in the home and in the school and in the hospital and in the street, in the presence of sickness and misfortune and danger and death—all this is of primary importance. The missionary may be able to interpret to them, to some good purpose, the law and the prophets and the psalms and the gospels, but the missionary and his family are the living epistles out of which they have the greater part of what they know about Christ and his religion.

It should not be needful to urge that the one great thing that we have to give to these Orient peoples is the knowledge of our God. "There are many glories in the religion of Jesus Christ," says Dr. William Newlon Clarke, "and it can do many services for men; but its crowning glory, or rather the sum of its glories is its God. Christianity has such a conception of God as no other religion has attained, and, what is more, it proclaims and brings to pass such an experience of God as humanity has never elsewhere known. It is in this that we find that superiority which entitles Christianity to offer itself to all mankind."

I once heard a brilliant Japanese scholar, who had been lecturing on the Oriental faiths, plumply asked, in the presence of his audience, by one who undoubtedly expected a different answer, whether, after all, Christianity was in any respect superior to the other faiths. He hesitated a little, but his answer came at length, clear and frank: "Yes, I think that the Christian faith in the Fatherhood of God is something better than any other religion has to offer." If that is true, there is nothing more to say. The case is concluded. If that is true, our one great business is to reveal this truth to those who do not know it. And it can only be revealed from life to life. Men can never know what friendship with God means except as they see that friendship incarnating itself in the terms and relations of human life; they must see it upholding and inspiring us, giving us comfort and courage,

and peace and power. Such lives as these, hid with Christ in God, are the continuing revelation, and it is quite impossible for us, by any other method, to present to the people of other faiths, the real meaning of the Christian religion. This intimate and vital knowledge of what is seminal and essential in Christianity must be communicated to those who need it as we have been communicating it through the consecrated lives of the men and women who become their neighbors and companions, and show them by a testimony which no logic can confute and no prejudice withstand, what it means to have for a friend the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is the patient subsoiling that has been going on for a hundred years, on all the fields of Christian missions which has opened the minds of the peoples to that great testimony which the nation is now prepared to utter, and which as I have tried to show is destined to appeal, with increasing power, to the great populations of the East.

Thus I have sought to bring before your minds the fact that the work which is so dear to us is going forward along other lines than those we are pursuing, and by the aid of mightier forces than we can muster. When we pray "Thy kingdom come," we are not always awake to the breadth of the grace by which our prayers are answered, "For God fulfils himself in many ways."

I am sure that we can all see how vitally related these two movements are; the spiritual movement, for which we stand; the national movement, which is part of God's providence. He is doing great things through the powers that be whom he has ordained, but He cannot do them without us. It would be strange if such a vision as this should lead us to disparage our work and relax our diligence; rather is it a rousing call to us to fling ourselves into it with a courage and a confidence that we have never known. God has commissioned this nation, within the last few years, in some unwonted and impressive ways, to show the non-Christian nations what Christianity means and in that call is a mighty summons to the Christians of this country to illuminate and

enforce the message of the nation to clothe it with crowning light and constraining love.

It is not a futile or a hopeless enterprise. See what mighty forces God is summoning to carry it forward. For these great nations, the nations that are bearing the standards of modern civilization are under compulsion to behave like Christians. Their policy must needs be increasingly, a Christian policy. There is no other way out, for any of them, in God's providence. Look at England! Reeling, alas! and somewhat incoherent, under the obsession of naval supremacy, but that is the bad side of England; we all have our bad sides. Look at what she has had to do for Egypt. Look at that South African nation which she has just welded together out of those peoples with which only yesterday she was in a deadly struggle. Was there ever anything finer than the magnanimity with which England has clothed the conquered Boers at once with full citizenship, trusting them utterly and putting the responsibility of self-government upon them? Could any nation have done this whose mind was not saturated with the Sermon on the Mount? It was Jesus Christ who taught her how to do it. For India, too, she has got to do a great deal of the same sort of thing, and she will do it, yes, she will do it under John Morley's head. John Morley may not be posing before the theological professors as a typical Christian, but for John Morley, as the Secretary of State for India, no path is open but that which is worked out by the ethics of the Christ. Whatever he believes he has got to behave like a Christian. And this is the way the world is going. Doubt it not, beloved, doubt it not.

The earth is circling onward out of shadow into light,
The stars keep watch above our head however dark the night.
For every martyr-stripe there glows a bar of morning bright,
And love is marching on!
Lead on, O cross of martyr-faith, with thee is victory!
Shine forth, O stars and reddening dawn, the full day yet shall be,
On earth His kingdom cometh, and with joy our eyes shall see
Our God is marching on.